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London, July 22 (RHC)-- Major shortcomings across the publicly funded British healthcare system, the National Health Service (NHS), have resulted in English children living “in agony” for years just to receive basic dental care.

The Guardian reports that data obtained under freedom of information laws and reviewed by the British outlet showed children in some parts of England were waiting up to 18 months on average for dental procedures under general anesthetic, principally tooth extractions. Some children have waited several years to receive necessary dental treatment.

The chairman of the British Dental Association blamed the UK Conservative government's "indifference" towards the multitude of children suffering from tooth pains needing dental treatment. "Children are waiting in agony thanks to the indifference successive governments have shown to dentistry," complained Eddie Crouch, as quoted by The Guardian.

"Year-long backlogs pre-date COVID, because 'prevention' has been little more than a buzzword. It's a perfect storm. Dentists are losing the battle to nip these problems in the bud, and struggle for theater space when extractions are the only option," he said.

Daisy Cooper, the Liberal Democrat MP for St Albans and Spokesperson for Health and Social Care depicted the British children's situation as "heartbreaking." "It is heartbreaking to think that some children are being left waiting in pain for months or even years for the specialized dental care they need. Every child deserves access to the dental care they need," she insisted.

"The government must take urgent action to address this dental crisis, including tackling staff shortages and reforming the broken system that has driven dentists away from offering NHS appointments," the MP stated.

In related news, NHS England's National Medical Director Sir Stephen Powis said on Wednesday that a two-day strike by NHS consultants over pay will put NHS care in England "at a standstill".

NHS England will be "virtually at a standstill" on Thursday and Friday when consultants stage their first strike in a decade, the service's top doctor said. Powis said the two-day strike over pay will cause "the most severe impact we have ever seen in the NHS as a result of industrial action."

The strikes will hold what they have made clear and will be the first in a rolling series of stoppages unless the government improves its offer of a 6 percent pay increase.

NHS consultants' strike comes as the NHS aimed to get back on track, recovering from a five-day strike that junior doctors held from last Thursday until yesterday.

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